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Committees
Economic Development, Small
Business and Regulatory Reform VC
Families and Human Services VC
Government Operations
Health Policy

The Jacobs Report

FOR IMMEDIATE RELEASE
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SENATE PASSES SCHOOL/GYM SAFETY BILLS

The Senate passed three bills on Tuesday that would require new teachers to be trained in cardiopulmonary resuscitation, school coaches to have sport safety training, and health clubs to have external defibrillators on the premises.

HB 4038 (Rocca), approved 36-2, would require new teachers to have CPR training before receiving their teaching certificate, prohibiting the state from issuing a certificate to a new teacher unless that person had a certificate from either the American Red Cross, the American Heart Association or a comparable agency. Requirements of the certificate would include a working knowledge of CPR, first aid and in choking prevention by administering the Heimlich maneuver and other methods. New teachers unable to perform these acts because of physical limitations would be exempt from the rules.

SB 179 (Hammerstrom), requiring coaches to have safety training, passed on a 37-1 vote. The bill would require first aid and other training for persons working as coaches for interscholastic athletic teams. All school boards would have to require that a new person hired or assigned as a coach had a sports safety training certificate from the Red Cross or an equivalent agency. The Red Cross and the U.S. Olympic Committee estimate that 91,000 Michigan youths are hospitalized annually because of sports related injuries.

SB 50 (Jacobs), which passed unanimously, would require private health clubs to have an external defibrillator and at least one person trained in CPR on the premises during all business hours. The requirement would affect any establishment with a primary business of physical exercise or weight control and would not apply to hotels and motels that provide workout equipment.

Sen. Gilda Jacobs (D-Huntington Woods) sponsored the legislation after a constituent died at a health club in her district. The health club had no safety policy other than calling 911.

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SMALL MARKET INSURANCE REFORM CLOSER TO APPROVAL BY SENATE

The Senate did not reach a final resolution on a series of health insurance bills last week, but new versions of the package are being drafted and could be approved by the end of this month.

The bi-partisan package of five Senate bills addresses the proper definition of rate bands for Blue Cross, HMOs and commercial insurers. By reforming the small group market, the Legislature seeks to protect small employers and their employees from unfair insurance practices that cause drastic rate increases.

The non-profit Blue Cross has argued that commercial carriers have too much latitude to set rates, allowing them to bargain-price younger, healthy persons and leave older, less healthy folks with Blue Cross as their only option. Blue Cross has argued that this pattern is leading to steadily increasing rates and a weaker financial position for the nonprofit insurer.

Conversely, commercial insurers have argued if they are limited too much, many of them will leave the state and if Blue Cross is given too much ability to vary rates, prices will rise too quickly and many people will be left without coverage.

Given the great complexity of this legislation, the Senate has used painstaking caution while moving it forward to a final vote. Line item details have been ironed out one-by-one to ensure that final language is amenable to small employers and would produce a stable, competitive small group market in Michigan.

COMING UP THIS WEEK IN THE SENATE

The Senate Committee on Health Policy continues to hear testimony on a package of bills that would provide for mental health parity in health insurance coverage. Testimony on Senate Bills 4 & 5, which began last week, will continue in the larger venue of the Boji Tower Senate Committee hearing room. Interested parties should feel free to call the committee clerk at (517) 373-3543 for more information.

Still awaiting consideration of the full Senate is SB 395 (McManus), a bill that would outlaw certain abortion procedures by creating a new definition of legal birth. SB 395 returned from the House last week and has been sitting on the calendar since. A vote this week is likely.

State Senator Gilda Jacobs represents the 14th Senate District, which includes Beverly Hills, Bingham Farms, Farmington, Farmington Hills, Ferndale, Franklin, Hazel Park, Huntington Woods, Lathrup Village, Oak Park, Pleasant Ridge, Royal Oak Township, Southfield, and Southfield Township. She is the Minority Vice Chair of the Families & Human Services Committee and the Economic Development, Small Business & Regulatory Reform Committee. She also serves on the Government Operations and Health Policy Committees.

Constituents of the 14th District may contact Senator Jacobs at sengjacobs@senate.michigan.gov or toll-free at 1-888-937-4453.

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